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BACKING INTO THE FUTURE: COLUMBUS, CLEOPATRA, CUSTER, & THE DIVERSITY REVOLUTION

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Editor's Note: On June 11, Dr. Cortés delivered the 1992 Public Humanities Lecture in San Jose. This article is adapted from his talk.

n 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas. At that very same time, American Indians discovered Columbus. Five hundred years later we prepare to celebrate that event. Or do we excoriate it? Or commemorate it? Or deplore it? Or merely recognize it?

Why, in 1992, should we still be debating — sometimes with detached calmness, sometimes with engaged vehemence — this 500-year-old event? Why should we still be arguing about how to deal publicly with it? Why can't we get our act together on this bit of ancient history?

Why has that long-dead Italian generated such an extraordinary degree of contemporary controversy, ranging from academic conferences to public events, including a mock trial of Columbus, a conflict over the Rose Bowl Parade, two competing motion pictures, and the renaming of Columbus Day as Indigenous People's Day by the city of Berkeley?

The answer is as simple as it is elusive. Because we are worried about the future. And as documentary filmmaker Ken Burns has suggested, "Our future lies behind us."

Because we do not — as so many pontificating commencement speakers have urged us to do — I repeat, we do not march into the future. We back into it. Because consciously or unconsciously, as individuals, as groups, as a society, even as a world, we all back into the future dragging the heavy hand of history. Because so many people believe — or fear — that the ways we think about the past



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influence our destinies. Because as we reconsider, rediscover, reread, rethink, rechart, rewrite, reteach, and recommemorate the past, we continuously rearrange the foundations upon which we currently operate and alter the dynamics that drive us backing into the future.

Since the 1960s, the United States has been racked by a History War, a struggle over the interpretation, teaching and commemoration of its past. That History War has involved battles for control of — or at least greater influence on — textbooks, courses, curricula, graduation requirements, and public observances. It has involved battles over what questions should be asked as we reexamine our past. It has involved battles over whom should be included and excluded as we remember our past. And it has involved battles over how we should teach and publicly commemorate our past. For as Plato warned, "Those who tell the stories also rule the society."

As one battleground in today's History War, Columbus has become a convenient personification and embodiment — at least for this year — of that contest for control over the

past. We may have backed five hundred years into the future, but our eyes remain firmly fixed on the past, and our battles for supremacy in interpreting and observing that past have become increasingly contentious with time.

But why? Let me suggest at least three reasons.

First, because today's History War addresses the very core of our humanity and identity, by contesting who and what should be considered basic to our remembered, transmitted, and commemorated heritage.

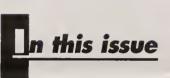
Second, because the History War addresses one irrefutable reality — that we cannot escape our past, even if we are ignorant of it, because history's heavy hand rests upon our present and influences our future, often in dramatic and unpredictable ways.

And finally, because the last quarter century has been a revolutionary period for the United States. I call it the Diversity Revolution. In terms of the humanities, that revolution has had two dimensions — demographic and conceptual.

The demographic dimension is easiest to describe. In the last quarter century, the United States has undergone a dramatic shift in its racial and ethnic composition. And those past demographic changes provide only an appetizer for the future.

According to a 1989 U.S. Bureau of the Census projection, in the next forty years, between 1990 and the year 2030, for the United States as a whole, while the White American population will increase by only 25 percent, the African-American population will increase by 68 percent, the Asian-American, Pacific Island-American, and American Indian populations will increase by 79 percent, and the Latino or Hispanic population will increase by 187 percent. In California, members of so-called minority groups are projected to become the population majority within the next decade. That's the demographic future into which we are backing.

Beyond that has been the conceptual aspect of the Diversity Revolution. During the 1960s, the civil



Council Awards Grants page 4

Twenty grants awarded for public programs and media projects. Several seek new ways to cross cultural and racial barriers.

Congress Hears about Humanities .. page 7

Council member Charles Muscatine on benefits of the public humanities

New Council Members Sought page 7

San Diego Office Opened page 7

New program officer working with Council and community members

The California Council for the Humanities is a statebased affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Humanities Network is published quarterly and mailed to anyone who requests it from the San

Francisco office.

COLUMBUS & AFTER UPDATE



ince July 1, the Council's touring troupe of scholars has visited Santa Barbara, Merced, and Santa Clara — attracting crowds and lots of thoughtful questions about "Columbus & After: Rethinking the Legacy." Now the program continues in Ukiah (July 29 - August 1), before heading north to Oregon, where the cast of characters from the past 500 years will appear under big-top tents in Medford, Bend and La Grande. Our next issue of Humanities Network will carry a full report on this joint project of the two state humanities councils.

BACKING INTO THE FUTURE, continued

rights movement spurred persons of diverse backgrounds to ask new questions about their heritage — not only about their general heritage as Americans, but also about their special ethnic heritages. How do our personal and group heritages fit into the larger American story? How has this influenced the American story? In some cases, why haven't these heritages been presented as part of the American story? Why are the voices of my ancestors missing?

These concerns ultimately lead to deeper, more troubling questions. How have past versions of the American story been distorted, intentionally or unintentionally, by leaving me out or by misrepresenting my presence? When will my stories be included, how will they be told, and where will they be taught? Such past-oriented questions backed the United States into the History War. As a two-decade participant-observer in this war, let me provide a bit of personal context... historical, of course.

Until the mid-1960s, most public celebrations and school teaching of U.S. history focused essentially on the story of White men. Even the venerable Library of Congress Building in Washington, D.C., continues to proclaim this ideological position via a huge granite-etched statement on its second floor balcony: "The History of the World Is the Biography of Great Men." I take that statement to be gender-specific, not gender-neutral, and while the word "White" does not appear before men, until the mid-1960s most U.S. history books featured few Great Men of other colors. Likewise, much of the historical study and teaching of American literature remained focused on the legendary "fourteen dead White men and Emily Dickinson.'

But the civil rights movement of the 1960s began to shake the historical ramparts, as the nation began its Diversity Revolution of changing demographics and changing expectations. Reflecting the impact of that revolution — what Alexander Hamilton called "the harsh logic of events" — California modified its State Education Code in 1969 to mandate that state-approved and adopted history and social studies textbooks "correctly portray the role and contributions of the American Negro and members of other ethnic groups."

But it's a long, long way from mandate to implementation. So when publishers submitted textbooks for consideration in the 1971 California history-social science adoption, few had complied with that portion of the code. Textbook revisions, after all, demand thought, time, and, of course, money

In response to this failure by publishers, Mexican-American and African-American activists, principally from Los Angeles, raised a protest against the books submitted for adoption for fifth through eighth grade, arguing that they did not meet the state education code. Faced with this challenge, the state Board of Education did what most governing entities do in time of crisis — they formed a task force. I happened to be one of the twelve scholars chosen to serve on that task force. Little did I know that I had been drafted unwittingly into the History War and that the course of my career and my life had been severely altered.

Our assignment was to evaluate the books in order to decide whether or not they met the code's mandate on the treatment of race and ethnicity. I

should add, parenthetically, that we asked if we could also address the issue of the treatment of women, but were told no, as the gender issue had not yet penetrated the education code.

So we evaluated the books. Now, I had spent nine years in college, had earned two Bachelor's degrees, two Master's degrees, and a Ph.D. (each in a different field), and had been teaching for more than three years at the University of California, Riverside. Yet I learned more during those four weeks on the task force than I had in any comparable period of my entire college career. It was a true postdoctoral seminar, as I listened to and contemplated the perspectives and interpretations voiced by serious, thoughtful women and men from different disciplines and of different

ethnic backgrounds. And guess what we found? The protesters had been right. Most of the books did not meet the state education code on the treatment of ethnic groups, which we duly reported to the Board of Education. Faced with the modern Hamletian dilemma — to adopt or not to adopt — the board responded with a perfunctory thank you, disbanded the committee, and formed a board subcommittee, augmented by one member of our task force selected, of course, by the board. After recommending a few token changes in the textbooks, the board then adopted

The 1971 California textbook protest provided one of the early expressions of the nation's conceptual Diversity Revolution and became one of the early History War skirmishes over multicultural recognition and inclusion. However, at first most of these battles occurred on the margins of education and on the fringes of public consciousness. Ethnic studies programs emerged, sometimes flourishing, sometimes disappearing. Courses on Chicano history, African-American literature, Native American culture, Asian-American theatre, and the psychology of women came into existence. Women and minorities appeared more often in textbooks and curricula, although usually in an addon, enrichment, tokenistic fashion. Public humanities programs funded more diversity-related projects.

Pluribus without Unum is anarchy. Conversely, however, Unum without Pluribus is oppression.

Congress designated Black History Month, and some communities celebrated Cinco de Mayo. But most important, the civil rights movement generated intensive research and writing about minorities and women. These often marginal phenomena would become the staging ground for what would be the next phase of the multicultural History War.

As an academic sideshow we were viewed with paternalism, sometimes with amusement, occasionally with irritation, but most often with disregard. It was fine as long as we premulticulturalists merely struggled for a spot on the educational margins — an ethnic history course, a women's literature course, even an occasional ethnic or women's studies major. It

was fine as long as pre-multiculturalists asked for and expressed proper gratitude for token textbook revision or curricular inclusion — a mention of Harriet Tubman, a photograph of Cesar Chavez, a paragraph on Chief Joseph, or even the recognition that Japanese-Americans had been interned during World War II. It was fine for schools and communities to recognize Cinco de Mayo, observe Black History Month, or hold ethnic food day. As festival-celebration, curriculum-enriching, textbooktokenizing marginals, premulticulturalists were tolerated, even patronized.

But as the 1980s progressed, multicultural research, teaching, and engagement in the public arena increasingly moved from the margins to center stage. During the past decade, multiculturalists have launched a challenge to mainstream education, to the public humanities, and to traditional views of history. In the process they have achieved widespread and often unnerving successthat is, unnerving to traditionalists. Curricula, textbooks, graduation requirements, and state education codes and frameworks have become multiculturalized. Public humanities programs have responded with increased attention both to our nation's growing diversity and to the historical, contemporary, and future importance of that diversity.

But the success of multiculturalism has spawned a reaction — although not exactly an equal and opposite one from the guardians of the humanities status quo. For the Macbeths of traditionalism, the Birnam wood of multiculturalism, safely marginalized in the 1960s and 1970s, has come to high Dunsinane hill. The counterattack has been led by a group I shall

refer to as the Culture Cops. The rallying cry of the Culture Cops has been PC, Political Correctness, the new academic and societal strawman. The counterattack has come via the rise of PCology, the pseudoscientific demonology of accusing anyone who supports multiculturalism as being an agent of Political Correctness. Unable to mount a coherent argument against multiculturalism, the Culture Cops have resorted to lumping, labeling, and stereotyping. Those who dare to advocate multicultural education, to publicly oppose bigotry, to present multicultural historical reinterpretations, or to propose changes in the traditionalist canon become the target of these neo-McCarthyite demonologists, who conflate them into a single category — "the enemy" and brand them with the scarlet PC.

I must admit that on a couple of points — two in particular — my own beliefs happen to coincide with those of the PCologists. First, I agree with them that some multiculturalists (better yet, pseudo-multiculturalists), in their group-centered zeal and in their knee-jerk celebrating of diversity, have ignored the equally important imperative of unity and the need to recognize the cultural values and elements that bind us together as a nation. Pluribus without Unum is anarchy. Conversely, however, Unum without Pluribus is oppression.

For that reason I have taken the trouble to define myself as an E Pluribus Unum multiculturalist. That is, I see the Diversity Revolution's opportunities and challenges in terms of the historical American balancing act of responding simultaneously to powerful Pluribus (pluralistic) and

necessary Unum (unifying) imperatives, as well as carefully limiting both extremist Pluribus and extremist Unum when they become societally destructive.

l also agree with the PCologists on another point, which in itself contains elements of historical irony. As with most words, the precise linguistic origins of Political Correctness remain shrouded in mystery. Somebody said it the first time, but I'm not sure who did. The most convincing etymological theory about the evolution of that label seems to be that multiculturalists themselves invented PC to poke fun at that multicultural fringe group whom I shall refer to as the Word Cops. These are the hypersensitive language sleuths who have made an avocation of looking for any statement or illustration that they can possibly construe as being offensive, insensitive, homophobic, racist, sexist, agist, or any other kind of "ist." Having personally been branded PC by the Culture Cops for championing multiculturalism and multicultural education, I have also been chastised by the Word Cops for my lack of sensitivity.

On one occasion, a young female professor furiously took notes during one of my public lectures. In the ensuing question-and-answer period, she proceeded to blast me because I had used more quotes from men than from women. You heard me right. While I was talking, she was counting.

Last year I wrote an essay for teachers that I entitled "Latinos/ Hispanics." Again I was criticized, by some people for using the word, Latinos, and by others for using the word, Hispanics. Being jumped by opposing groups of Word Cops gave me a great sense of comfort, comparable to the self-righteousness I feel when I am criticized by the PCologist Culture Cops.

After all, who decides what is the "right" word for an ethnic group? We don't hold national conventions to vote on the correct self-designation. The natural result — we use a variety of self-designations and sometimes we even disagree. When the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People celebrates Black History Month by holding an African-American. Unity Banquet to raise money for the United Negro College Fund, you're going to tell me that any single word

is right?

There are plenty of historically embedded negative epithets and demeaning references that I imagine most Americans would consider wrong, but there are few labels that I consider to be uncontestably right. While I recognize the critical importance of language, my fear of the excesses of the often well-intentioned but over-zealous Word Cops, including those who spend their time inventing new ways to be offended, has impelled me to oppose more speech codes. Yet laid end to end, these usually ineffectual and often laughable Word Cops do not add up to anything resembling the fictitious radical reign of terror that PCologists claim is suffocating freedom of thought and expression on college campuses throughout the nation.

If multicultural advocates like myself must suffer the slings and arrows of the hypersensitive Word Cops on one side, we must also do battle with the hyperventilating PCologist Culture Cops on the other. While the Word Cops spend their time criticizing others for being insensitive or using inappropriate language, the PCologist Culture

As that old radical, England's Queen Victoria, once mused, 'Change must be accepted... when it can no longer be resisted.'

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Cops engage in a self-proclaimed crusade to preserve the American way of life, or at least the traditional American way of writing, teaching, and publicly observing history and other humanities. Of course, I'm not always sure what tradition they are trying to preserve. After all, exactly one hundred years ago a comparable debate over curriculum revision was occurring in the United States, only in this case it was the guardians of Greco-Roman tradition who were opposing the incorporation of such literary and philosophical Johnny-come-latelies as Machiavelli, Dante, and Shakespeare.

Like Chicken Little, the PCologists fear that the sky will fall down if a university establishes an ethnic studies graduation requirement, creates ethnic or women's studies courses, multiculturalizes its teaching of American history and culture, or worst of all requires world civilization rather than western civilization. Yet the teaching of world civilization does not obviate the importance of western civilization. Rather it examines western civilization alongside other civilizations. As Rudyard Kipling wrote, "What should they know of England who only England know?" Academic supporters of world civilization requirements are hardly Mohandas Gandhi who, when asked what he thought of western civilization, responded that he thought it would be

The positing of new interpretations of our nation's history and injecting of new voices into our literary heritage do not threaten American Unum, but rather recast that Unum as a more Pluribus concept that recognizes the importance and value of engaging and considering previously marginalized voices and perspectives. Furthermore, multicultural perspectivism is not synonymous with relativism, although PCologists either ignore or fail to comprehend the difference. The presentation and consideration of new perspectives do not require the adoption of valueless, non-judgmental relativism, but rather call for the consideration of alternative perspectives in making judgments.

Yet the PCologist version of the History War has received witting or unwitting support from most of the (so-called liberal) media, which often lapses into uninformed PCologist-framed caricature in its discussions of multiculturalism and multicultural education. Many journalists have uncritically ingested and robotically repeated the PCologist litany in neo-Descartian fashion: "The PCologists say it, therefore it must be."

For example, the cover of the July 8, 1991 *Time* featured multicultural education with the subtle headline, "What Are We? American kids are getting a new — and divisive — view of Thomas Jefferson, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July." And what did *Time* present as a cover illustrating multiculturalism's divisiveness — an African-American, an American Indian, and a White American march-

ing under the American flag? Is that divisive — to show persons of three racial ancestries together under the American flag? Am I going bonkers? Am I loony tunes? Unfortunately, that cover reflects the apparent fears of both the PCologists and their supporters, the fear that, impelled by the Diversity Revolution, minorities and women are gaining too much recognition as being part of our American heritage.

But when you get right down to it, while PCologists toss around the Political Correctness label with reckless abandon, I'm still not quite sure what they really mean. It reminds me of the words of Rebecca West, who back in 1913 wrote:

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat."

Well, times have changed. The Diversity Revolution has arrived. And for the PCologists and other defenders of the humanities status quo, I've got a multicultural message. "No more doormat." Who knows, the multicultural revision of the humanities might eventually result in Americans backing into the future as greater equals, at least as greater equals in their legitimate and overdue claims to being recognized as part of our nation's heritage.

Was Cleopatra Black?

As the Columbus controversy, the textbook struggles, and the *Time* cover demonstrate, the History War ranges far beyond academia into the public sector. In fact, as we back into the future, we're even fighting public battles over things that occurred more than a thousand years *before* Columbus.

"Was Cleopatra Black?" So asked the cover of the September 23, 1991 issue of *Newsweek*.

Was Cleopatra Black? Quickly, yes

Or make it a multiple choice question. Yes. No. Both. Neither. I couldn't care less. Or was she really a Chicana?

Was Cleopatra Black? The answer, if approached in a yes-no, true-false, or multiple choice format, becomes trivialized. The question, however, if taken seriously and with all of its complexity, addresses some fundamental issues about the past and the way that we relate to it.

Way that we relate to it.

If we focus merely on the yes-shewas/no-she-wasn't dichotomy, we are engaging in a futile exercise in presentism. Cast in this dichotomous fashion, the question merely asks you to take contemporary U.S. thinking about racial categorization, hop into a time machine, zip back across time, space, and culture, and impose that thinking on ancient Egypt. Would we, as 1992 Americans, categorize her as Black?

But that's more than just ahistorical presentism. That's cultural imperialism, because it implies that our ways of categorizing people by race are correct and, therefore, superior to all other times, places, and cultures.

Worse than that, it trivializes the issues of race, racism, and diversity. I have not spent nearly a quarter of a century of my life battling in the History War for multicultural education and intergroup understanding so that the next time they remake the movie, "Cleopatra," they cast Diana Ross in the lead rather than Madonna.

But if the answer is so irrelevant, so presentist, and so trivializing, then why do I say that the question is important? I do so because the question, if taken seriously and answered with complexity, not dichotomously, challenges us to rethink the place of Africa in world history and to question the process of the social construction of knowledge. It embodies the challenge to historical thinking issued by Martin Bernal in his book, The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785-1985, the first volume of his Black Athena series, in which he accuses nineteenth-century European classicists of purposefully rewriting history by downplaying African and Semitic influences on Greek and therefore western civilization. It embodies the challenge by Molefi Kete Asanti and other Afrocentrists, who call for a reinterpretation of world history with Africa holding greater prominence.

The question — was Cleopatra Black? — is important because it again raises the issue of whose voices have been and will be heard, whose perspectives have been and will be recognized, and whose interpretations have been or will be considered. It also raises the question of why these voices have traditionally been ignored, minimized, marginalized, and often excluded from our thinking about and discussions of the past.

The issue is not whether you agree with all of the arguments proffered by Martin Bernal. Nor is it a matter of accepting every claim made by Afrocentrists, by women's studies scholars, by gay and lesbian scholars, or by scholars of the Latino, American Indian, Asian-American, or other group experiences. Their interpretations, like all scholarly interpretations, demand careful assessment. Whatever distorted cries of alarm may arise from the ranks of the PCologists, true multiculturalists do not seek to substitute insular ethnocatechism for exclusivist Eurocatechism. Quite the contrary, our goal is to keep the humanities open to the ongoing weighing of new perspectives and to the ongoing contemplation of the historical and future implications of these new interpretations.

In short, the question — was Cleopatra Black? — is important because it influences the way that we back into the future. Do we back into the future with a willingness to remain open to a continuous reconsideration of our heritage and its significance for the years to come? Or do we close our minds to thinking about the past and demand instead that we and our heirs merely ingest a calcified status quo view of the past, a closed-ended cultural literacy in which historical knowledge and American culture are static givens to be memorized, not dynamic processes to be continuously analyzed, reconsidered, and reinterpreted?

Custer's Next Stand

Who won the Battle of the Little Bighorn? Well, it depends which battle you are talking about.

In 1876 the Sioux and the Cheyenne won, when they annihilated George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry in the First Battle of the Little Bighorn.

Then came the Second Battle of the Little Bighorn, when the federal government transformed that land into the Custer Battlefield National Monument, ignoring the fact that Custer and his troops weren't out there alone. What happened to those other folks, the ones who fought and died battling against Custer in the struggle to defend their land and their way of life? By taking the Little Bighorn and naming it Custer Battlefield National Monument, Congress had erased the Indian historical presence, stilled their voices, and for the time being turned those warriors into the vanishing Americans. White America had won the Second Battle.

Then came 1989, and a group of Indians reclaimed the battlefield, or at least reclaimed their historical presence on the battlefield when, without authorization, they erected a plaque commemorating Indian heroes of the battle and reinjecting Indian perspectives into that monument. The plaque later came down, but the point had been made — we, too, have played a part in our nation's past. The Third Battle of the Little Bighorn had begun, to be concluded in 1991 when Congress renamed the battlefield as the Little Bighorn National Monument and approved the establishment of a memorial there to Indians who died in the battle. In this way Congress transformed the monument from the exclusivist celebration of only White soldiers to an inclusivist commemoration of all of the participants, whatever

their races and ethnicities. So who won? Well, Indians won the first battle. White men won the second battle. And all Americans won the third battle, because it signified a victory for multiculturalism, for incorporating the voices of Americans of all backgrounds into the public commemorations of our nation's past. It signified a victory for all Americans because it was a step toward backing into the future as a more inclusive nation by recognizing the historical validity and societal importance of engaging the multiple perspectives and multiple experiences that make up our national heritage, rather than continuing the exclusivist celebration of that heritage in a manner than includes some Americans and excludes other

* * *

Nehru of India once said, "Life is like a game of cards. The hand that is dealt you is determinism; the way you play it is free will." Demographic projections guarantee that the Diversity Revolution will continue to gain momentum and become an even more dynamic element of our future determinism. But we, as Americans, and we, as humanists, can play the hand of diversity with a high degree of free will.

In fact, despite the wailings of the PCologists, multiculturalism and multicultural education may have already triumphed, although the form of that triumph will continue evolving in the future. Maybe the signal came from Diane Ravitch, co-author of California's 1987 History-Social Science Framework and an assistant secretary

Continued on page 7

Grants Awarded

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Stitching Our Communities Together: Creative Coalitions between African-Americans and Latinas in South Central Los Angeles

Sponsor: Concerned Citizens of South Centrol Los Angeles

Project Director: Juanito Tate

Amount of Award: \$10,600 in outright funds

This multi-faceted project explores cultural traditions and change as seen in the needlework and stories of women who live in South Central Los Angeles. Once known as "Little Harlem," the heart and soul of Black Los Angeles, the neighborhood's identity has changed with the arrival of many Latino residents, as well as Asian Americans. In search of a shared sense of place beyond ethnic identification, the project will present a series of workshops and discussions leading to a public exhibit in May 1993.

Between Two Worlds: The People of the Border

Sponsor: Oaklond Museum Project Director: Phil Mumma

Amount of Aword: \$12,500 in matching funds if \$25,000 is raised in outside gifts

The "Between Two Worlds" exhibit and symposium considers the experiences and concerns of undocumented Latinos who come to California, particularly those who live along the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as the long history and broad impact of northward immigration in the state. The program offers exhibit texts and videotaped interviews in Spanish as well as English. Events begin in October 1992.

The Other California: Defining the Great Central Valley for the Twenty-first Century

Sponsor: Modesto Junior College Project Directors: Stanley Spector and Lynn Hansen

Amount of Aword: \$12,498 in outright funds

This nine-lecture series examines aspects of life in the Great Central Valley, reclaiming the complex layers of its past and analyzing issues pertinent to its future. Topics include vanishing landscapes, ethnicity of labor, and voices from the heartland. Accompanying the lectures will be a photography exhibit and a series of literary readings and film screenings focusing on life in the valley. Programs begin in February 1993.

The Family Ranching Tradition in Solano County (A Traveling Exhibit)

Sponsor: Foirfield Civic Arts
Project Director: Shirley Schoufel
Amount of Aword: \$10,000 in outright funds ond
\$8,840 in matching funds if
\$17,680 is raised in outside gifts

Ranching traditions speak to questions of the environment, women's roles, and the economy, along with the methods and importance of agriculture in California. This exhibit draws upon photographs, interviews, and common objects from ranches of yesterday and today to ask questions about continuity and change. Can ranching continue to be viable in the face of rapid development and population growth? Plans call for the exhibit to travel from Fairfield to five other northern California sites – urban as well as rural – beginning in November 1992.



"Between Two Worlds" explores the dilemmas of undocumented immigrants. Photo by Don Bartletti.

To the Azores and Back Again: In Poetry and Painting

Sponsor: Merced County Courthouse Museum Project Director: Andrea Metz Amount of Award: \$10,849 in outright funds

The heart of this traveling exhibit and accompanying public programs is the painting and poetry of Art Coelho and other Portuguese-American artists in the Central Valley, including Sam Pereira, Pedro Da Silviera, J. Martins Garcia, and Manuel Luis Ponte. Examining conflicts between cultural loyalty and assimilation experienced by both immigrants and their descendants, the project brings together poets, scholars, and the general public. Plans call for the exhibit to open in March 1993, later traveling from Merced to Tulare and Fresno.

Following the Style of the Sankofa Bird: Looking Back at African Culture To Restore Positive Values

Sponsor: San Diego Urban League Project Director: Tchoiko Ruramai Kwoyana Amount of Award: \$11,500 in outright funds

In Ghana, the Sankofa Bird symbolizes the quest for knowledge, for self correction, for a return to the source. This project seeks to bring the restorative wisdom and traditions of African cultures to contemporary communities in San Diego. A Sunday afternoon speaker series, each one at a different African-American community group, will foster dialogue about culture, change, and survival among audience members and humanities scholars. Events begin in September 1992.

MEDIA PROJECTS

SCRIPTS

A Dialogue with Society

Sponsor: Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Chicogo Project Director: Jonothon Robinson Amount of Award: \$9,888 in outright funds

This film script explores aspects of poverty, race and incarceration through the words of Piri Thomas, a poet who chronicles life in the streets of Puerto Rico and New York, along with his experiences in prison. The project examines the writing of Thomas, now a San Francisco resident, in the context of the many stories, music, visual arts that represent California's diverse Latino experience. It asks questions about cultural and linguistic links, as well as differences, that contribute to the sense of *mestisaje*, or mixture, among Latinos.

Filipino Americans: In Search of a Past and Present

Sponsor: Filipino American Notional Historical Society, Seottle

Project Director: Tereso Romero Jomero Amount of Aword: \$10,000 in outright funds

This video documentary script looks at the long history of Filipino presence in North America, which pre-dates the American Revolution. Using oral histories and artifacts from the Filipino American Historical Society, the program will explore the values and experiences of generations, as well as the impact of one million Filipino immigrants who have arrived since 1965.

The Curtis Project

Sponsor: The Curtis Project, Sonta Barbora
Project Director: Anne Makepeace
Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds and
\$2,000 in matching funds if
\$4,000 is raised in outside gifts

Edward S. Curtis was a controversial figure in his own time as today — accused of romanticizing the life of the Native Americans he photographed as well as furthering the myth of the vanishing Indian. This script for a feature film tells his story as a charismatic, self-taught photographer and a man driven to photograph every existing tribe in the west. It also examines historical and anthropological studies of the actual, often desperate circumstances on Indian reservations at the turn of the century.

Bloodline in Ink: The Life and Work of Ernest Gaines

Sponsor: Louisiano Public Broodcasting, Baton Rouge Project Director: Rick Smith Amount of Aword: \$5,000 in outright funds

For more than forty years, Ernest J. Gaines has been writing about tradition and change, community and race in the South. This film script considers his contributions to twentieth century literature and folklore, both in his home state of Louisiana and his adopted California. It explores the larger, human themes of courage, strength and dignity that Gaines has continually illuminated in his stories of Black rural life in the South.

Grants Awarded

Horace Bristol: Lens on History

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco Project Director: David Rabinovitch Amount of Award: \$9,898

The photographs of Horace Bristol offer a portrait of California and America during the 1930s and 1940s. After wide publication in magazines during those years, his work disappeared from public view for 35 years, a loss this film script seeks to correct. With John Steinbeck, Bristol traveled through migrant work camps and for *Life* magazine he recorded images of World War II. Now 82, Bristol is interviewed about his work and his life in the United States and in Japan, where he moved after the war.

Ask Your Mama

Sponsor: University of LaVerne, Educational Programs in Corrections Project Director: John E. Murphy Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

"Ask Your Mama," an 800-line poem that Langston Hughes wrote, becomes the basis for a journey through African-American wit and poetry in this film script project. Drawing upon the satirical style of speech known as "the dozens" and both jazz and blues motifs, Hughes' poem recounts the arrival and centuries-long struggles of Black people in America. The project calls for students from the California Youth Authority to participate in each stage of production, exploring the ideas and traditions the poem evokes.

The Freeway Film

Sponsor: Hennepin History Museum, Minneapolis, Minn. Project Director: Christine W. Craton Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

In pursuit of speed and mobility, Californians of the 1950s and 60s built a freeway system that became not only a means of transportation but a tangible representation of prevailing priorities and values. In the construction process many urban neighborhoods where ethnic minorities and poor people lived were changed irrevocably. This film script examines the freeways' legacy and asks the question, "at what cost were they built?" In addition to work in Los Angeles, filmmakers will consider the impact of freeway systems in Chicago, New Orleans and other cities.

Skin Deep

Sponsor: Iris Feminist Collective, Inc., Oakland Project Director: Frances Reid Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

Racial tension on college campuses is the subject of this film script, which will attempt to find honest approaches to interracial discussions and address the obstacles to successful multiracial communities. Student participants will use journal prose and poetry to communicate their own experiences, as well as examine the work of writer Barbara Christian. A series of scholar-led "community forums" is planned once the film is completed.

Women of Mystery

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco Project Director: Pamela Beere Briggs Amount of Award: \$8,458 in outright funds

In the past ten years, women mystery writers have created a new genre that focuses on contemporary women as heroes who solve dangerous problems. This film script profiles eight of the popular writers, three Californians, whose work also reflects the concerns and problems of late twentieth century society. Included are the ground-breaking Californians Marcia Muller, Sara Paretsky, and Sue Grafton, among others.

P P O D II C T I O N

Nana (Beginnings)

Sponsor: James S. Coleman African Studies Center, U.C.L.A. Project Director: Merrick Posnansky Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds and

\$10,000 in matching funds if \$20,000 is raised in outside gifts

One year ago, a group of five Los Angeles high school students traveled to Grahamstown, South Africa, where they met and lived with five South African students in a Black township. This film documents significant aspects of their crosscultural exchanges and reflections on matters of racial and cultural diversity. As the title Nana ("beginning" in Zulu) implies, the students looked for new ways to examine questions of race and identity and to develop collaborative approaches to filmmaking. Students and their families also communicated via "videophone" hook-ups, hoping to establish an ongoing dialogue about the complexities of American and South African racial experiences.





At left: Observer takes a close look at a freeway model in this photo from "The Freeway Film" project. At right: Iron workers Albert Stalk Jr. and Sr. at the Kahnawake Mohawk Reserve in Quebec, where they were interviewed for an audio program called "Worklore" (photo courtesy of "Journeys on the Job" project).

The Donner Party

Sponsor: WGBH, Boston
Project Director: Ric Burns
Amount of Award: \$10,000 in matching funds if
\$20,000 is raised in outside gifts

Three years before the Gold Rush, the Donner party was part of the westward emigration to Upper California, then part of Mexico. This film tells the story of people seeking good, cheap land but finding that their "shortcut" across the Great Basin led to months of hardship and death for half their party in 1846. Other historical events in what was called "the year of decision" included war with Mexico over California, the Bear Flag Revolt, and the cession of Oregon. The program considers the interrelatedness of public relations, manifest destiny, and the American Dream in the story of westward expansionism.

90 in the 90s: Changes in Women's Lives in the 20th Century Part 2 –The Twenties

Sponsor: Clarity Educational Productions, Berkeley Project Directors: Gail Dolgin and Judith Montell Amount of Award: \$25,000 in matching funds if \$50,000 is raised in outside gifts

In the 1920s, women gained the right to vote and to more employment opportunities as American society adopted urbanization, electricity, and the automobile after World War I. Often seen today as an era of prosperity and new freedom for women, the 20s also gave rise to the Ku Klux Klan and devastating crackdowns on unions. This pilot episode for a television series will use interviews with surviving women from this era to consider the ways that individual lives both affect and are affected by changing times. Stories told by women — many who were not well off, not White, not flappers — come to the foreground of this decade-by-decade series.

Ancestors in America

Sponsor: Center for Educational Telecommunications, San Francisco Project Director: Loni Ding

Amount of Award: \$25,000 in matching funds if \$50,000 is raised in outside gifts

This grant supports the first episode in a television series about Asian-American immigrants and their descendants, encompassing the experiences of the Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans and Southeast Asians — portraying each as an actor in her or his own history. Through tracing family trees, using the first-person voice and other approaches of the "docu-memoir," this episode focuses on the Chinese who arrived during the 1850s Gold Rush. It makes use of many documents presenting the words and thoughts of early immigrants that have only recently been translated into English, including Cantonese folk songs and deeds to agricultural properties.

Journeys on the Job: Exploring Identity, Meaning and Values in Work

Sponsor: RadioWest, Universal City Project Director: Audrey Coleman Amount of Award: \$25,000 in matching funds if \$50,000 is raised in outside gifts

"Journeys on the Job" is a series of audiotapes with print anthologies that tell the stories of working people in a wide variety of employment circumstances. Drawing upon the work of contemporary writers such as Ricardo Sanchez and J. California Cooper as well as Carl Sandburg, Frederick Douglass, and Herman Melville, the episodes explore experiences and values, as well as ways that workers maintain a sense of individuality and meaning. Interviews will be included with workers from industry, offices, ranches, and food service.

Calendar of Humanities Events

Please note: Dates and times should be confirmed with local sponsors. These listings are often provided to the Council well before final arrangements are made.

EXHIBITS

- "Seeds of Change" is a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution, exploring 500 years of encounter and exchange among Native American and European peoples. A locally created exhibit, "Native Sons and Daughters: A Look at the Yokut Indians of Central California," accompanies the show at the Merced County Courthouse Museum, 21st & N Streets, Merced. 209/385-7426
- Through
 Sept. 7
 "Continuing Traditions: Japanese Americans, Story of a People 1869-1992" is an exhibit with public programs at the Sacramento History Museum, 101 "I" Street, Sacramento. 916/449-2057
- Through
 Nov. 13
 "The Ohlone Indians of the Bay Area: A Continuing Tradition" is an exhibit about the contributions of Native Americans past and present, at CSU Hayward, 4047 Meiklejohn Hall. Hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday Friday (other times may be arranged for groups). 510/881-3104
- Through
 Nov. 30
 "Country Voices: Three Generations of Japanese American
 Farming" is an exhibit and series of public programs at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1515 Van Ness Avenue, Fresno.
 209/441-1444
- **Classical Chinese Furniture** examines the furniture styles and the culture of the Ming Dynasty in China. At the San Francisco Craft & Folk Art Museum, Fort Mason, San Francisco. 415/775-0990
- Oct. 11 "Cahuilla Voices: We Are Still Here" is an exhibit about the role of cultural traditions and artistic expression in the survival of southern California's Cahuilla Indians. At the University Art Gallery, U.C. Riverside. 714/787-3755
- **Oct. 24- "Between Two Worlds: The People of the Border" is an exhibit that considers the experiences and concerns of undocumented Latinos who come to California, particularly those who live along the U.S.-Mexico border. At the Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland. 510/238-3842

E V E N T S

- Aug. 15 "The American Dream" is a lecture in the series entitled "Issei Pioneers: Hawaii and the Mainland," examining the role of the immigrant in the American Dream. At the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, 244 S. San Pedro Street, North Gallery, Los Angeles, from 1:30 4:30 p.m. 213/625-0414
- "Mutual Images: What Do Japanese Americans Think of Each Other?" is a lecture about the ways that Japanese and Nikkei perceptions of each other have changed over the years. At the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, 244 S. San Pedro Street, North Gallery, Los Angeles, from 1:30 4:30 p.m. 213/625-0414

- Sept. 13 "Following the Style of the Sankofa Bird: Looking Back at African Culture to Restore Positive Values" presents its first lecture/discussion in San Diego. Please call Tchaiko Ruramai Kwayana at 619/546-0288 for further information and to confirm location and date.
- **Columbus and After: Rethinking the Legacy" is a reading-and-discussion group at the Santa Clara City Library, exploring themes of cultural encounters raised by the Council's summer chautauqua program of the same title. Meetings are from 7 to 9 p.m., continuing on Sept. 30, and Oct. 7 and 21. For more information, contact Mary Hanel at 408/984-3236
- "Country Voices: Three Generations of Japanese American Farming" presents a lecture entitled "Issei Voices" given by Dr. Isao Fugimoto, senior lecturer at UC Davis. The presentation will examine the experiences of Japanese immigrating to and establishing roots on American soil. From noon to 1:30 p.m., at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1515 Van Ness Avenue, Fresno. 209/441-1444
- Oct. 10 "The Democracy Conference" is part of the Council's special initiative on "Political Dialogue and the Common Good." At the College of the Desert in Palm Desert. For more information, contact Terry Green at 619/773-2561.
- Oct. 11 "Following the Style of the Sankofa Bird: Looking Back at African Culture to Restore Positive Values" presents its second lecture/discussion in San Diego. Please call Tchaiko Ruramai Kwayana at 619/546-0288 for further information and to confirm location and time.
- Oct. 13 "Country Voices: Three Generations of Japanese American Farming" presents a lecture entitled "Ag Literacy in the Japanese American Culture" given by Mas Masumoto, writer and farmer. From noon to 1:30 p.m., at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1515 Van Ness Avenue, Fresno. 209/441-1444
- "Transforming the Japanese American Kinship: From Kazoku to Family" is a lecture exploring the differences between Japanese American families and the perception of the White, middle class American family. At the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, 244 S. San Pedro Street, North Gallery, Los Angeles, from 1:30 pm 4:30. 213/625-0414
- Oct. 31 "Symposium on Classical Chinese Furniture" sponsored by the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum will convene the world's leading scholars of Ming art and culture. At the Cowell Theatre at Fort Mason, San Francisco, from 9 a.m. 5 p.m. 415/775-0990
- **Nov. 8** "Sephardic Culture & Music" is a pre-concert panel discussion with humanities scholars that explores Sephardic culture and music, followed by a concert. The discussion is scheduled from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the Jewish Federation Campus, 250 Baker Street, Costa Mesa. (714) 559-4906





Above: Outdoor meeting of Mission Indians in 1930, from the "Cahuilla Voices" exhibit (photo courtesy of Riverside Municipal Museum). At right: Nineteenth century ice box from "Classical Chinese Furniture" exhibit (photo by Jose Ysaguirre).

Humanities News

Congress Hears about the Humanities



Charles Muscatine

On April 9, the Council's Charles Muscatine testified on behalf of the Federation of State Humanities Councils at the U.S. House of Representatives. Currently serving as federation chair, he spoke in support of a \$32 million appropriation to the NEH Division of State Programs for the upcoming fiscal year. Muscatine pointed to a loss of stability in America's communities, where intolerance of others has accompanied insecurity about the future.

"Anyone who has tried to conduct a public meeting these days recognizes the growing disrespect for orderly self-government," he said. "Reasoned debate, the ideal of our

democracy, too often gives way to shouting matches between special groups and special interests who never stopped to listen to each other. In many ways we have lost the balance between the common good and the narrower concerns of individuals that is essential to our social health."

Muscatine described the ways that public humanities programs address educational priorities: deepening knowledge, stimulating imagination, and fostering an increased sense of self-worth. He linked these benefits on a personal scale to a larger effect of building community.

"A sense of community depends on a sense of history," he continued. "All over the country, in venues large and small, council-sponsored talks, exhibits, films, workshops and conferences are bringing people together to study local history and tradition... Bringing historical study, or the reading of a relevant work of literature, or reasoned ethical analysis to bear on a community issue raises the level of argument, moving it beyond narrow, immediate and local grounds."

Muscatine cited projects nationwide that state humanities councils have credited with arousing sympathy for others' points of view and identifying new ways to talk to one another. He referred to programs in states like Utah and Maine, Oregon and Minnesota, as well as the Council's San Bernardino-Riverside project, "Longing for Community."

New Council Members Sought

The California Council for the Humanities will be selecting new members for its board in 1993. Members serve a three-year term, renewable once. Everyone on our mailing list will be sent a nominations form in the coming weeks.

San Diego Office Opens, New Program Officer Hired

The Council has opened an office in San Diego, sharing space with the San Diego Community Foundation, and has hired Ralph Lewin as a program officer. Plans and meetings are already under way for a major public project in 1993, exploring aspects of San Diego life through a variety of humanities formats.

Lewin comes to the Council with experience as a program coordinator at San Francisco State University, where he completed a master's degree in international relations. He has served as adjunct professor at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he taught a course on politics and culture in the United States. He holds bachelor's



Ralph Lewin

degrees in political science and German from U.C. Santa Barbara and has lived in Germany and Indonesia.

The address for Ralph Lewin at the Council's newest office is 101 West Broadway, Suite 1120, San Diego, CA 92101 (619/235-2307).

Proposal-Writing Workshops

Workshops are scheduled during August for people interested in submitting grant proposals at the Council's October 1 deadline.

In San Francisco:

Tuesday, August 18, 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, August 19, 10 a.m. to noon

In Los Angeles:

Thursday, August 20, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

In the new San Diego office, 101 West Broadway: Friday, August 21, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The workshops are free, but advance registration is required. Please call the nearest Council office (415/391-1474 in San Francisco, 213/623-5993 in Los Angeles, and 619/235-2307 in San Diego) to register and confirm dates.

CARLOS CORTÉS, Continued

in the U.S. Department of Education, when in 1990 she wrote in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "The real issue on campus and in the classroom is not whether there will be multiculturalism, but what kind of multiculturalism will there be?"

I think she's right. After all, throughout the nation, state legislatures and education departments increasingly are mandating multicultural education in kindergarten through twelfth grade (for example, Minnesota now requires multicultural, gender-fair, disability aware education). Moreover, according to a 1991 study (reported in the January/February, 1992, issue of Change), nearly one half of all U.S. four-year colleges and universities now have some sort of multicultural graduation requirement, nearly half require world civilization, and more than half offer courses in ethnic and/ or women's studies.

Further support for Ravitch's conclusion came from renowned classicist Bernard Knox, who delivered the 1992 National Endowment for the Humanities' Jefferson Lecture, which he entitled "The Oldest Dead White European Males." In an interview in the Washington Post

published the day before his lecture, Knox admitted that the canon should be expanded, while also arguing that he opposed "jettisoning the old one and putting in an entirely knew one." I agree. I, too, oppose such jettisoning. In fact, so does virtually every multiculturalist I know, although you'd never guess that from the hysterical lamentations of the Culture Cops or the churlish carpings of the Word Cops.

We can listen to new voices along with the old. Homer and Hawthorne can co-exist with Maxine Hong Kingston. We can read Toni Morrison without jettisoning Herman Melville. Leslie Silko and John Steinbeck can help us explore human dilemmas, as can Shakespeare. Thomas Wolfe can enlighten us, but so can Tomas Rivera. In the words of Alfred North Whitehead, "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order."

If Diane Ravitch is correct, then the History War has truly moved into its next phase, in which multiculturalists with often widely adivergent perspectives will work together and argue together and build together to help us back more

successfully into the future of the Diversity Revolution. Not that the History War has ended. It will continue because the ongoing advances in scholarship and humanistic expression related to race, ethnicity, gender, and other aspects of American diversity will constantly live in tension with historically rooted, traditionalistic humanities beliefs, ideologies, and emotions, thereby maintaining the enriching turbulence of the humanistic landscape. As that old radical, England's Queen Victoria, once mused, "Change must be accepted...when it can no longer be resisted."

Certainly multiculturalism will not resolve all contemporary problems nor even all questions raised by the Diversity Revolution. The multiculturalizing of the humanities will not *solve* the problems of socioeconomic inequality, of political representation, or of poverty and crime and violence. It won't even *solve* the problem of bigotry, which has existed throughout history. Yet it can *contribute* to greater social cohesion through better self, intragroup, intergroup, and ultimately societal understanding, even

if it does not fully achieve Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's dream when he wrote, "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility." For as we rethink, rewrite, reteach, and recommemorate through history, literature, and the other humanities and arts, we reshape and sometimes recast the very metaphors that form the perceptual guideposts to our multicultural future.

British historian A.J.P. Taylor once wrote, "The great lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history." History does not teach, but we may learn from it. And as we learn more about the past, not only about the Biographies of Great Men, but also about the struggles and striving, the victories and defeats, the agonies and ecstasies of ordinary people women and men of all racial and ethnic backgrounds — then maybe we can help ourselves and others to do what Columbus is given credit for doing. Maybe we can all back into the future together because we have finally — and more fully — discovered America. 💠

CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

The Colifornio Council is a portnership af public and ocodemic life whose mission is to bring the insights of history, literature, philosophy and the world of ideas to Californians everywhere in the stote.

Since its inception in 1975, the Council has oworded more than \$12 million enobling nonprofit organizations to produce exhibits, film and rodio progroms, lecture series ond canferences on topics of significance to Colifornions. Over 1,000 museums, librories, medio organizations, professional associations, orts presenters, government ogencies ond cammunity groups have benefitted from Council support.

The Council olso serves Colifornions with projects of its awn. These include on onnual humanities lecture and presentation serving a different city each year; a Scholors in the Schools program; publications distributed to librories, schalars ond the general public; coordination and support of local humonities coalitions; an initiotive on the cammon good, which is o partnership of organizations dedicated to volues of colloboration in public life; ond, in 1992, o travelling "living history" chautauquo on the legocy of Calumbus, touring four Colifornio cities.

The Council is an independent notfor-profit organization supported by contributions from individuols, corparations and foundations, and by grants from the Notional Endawment for the Humonities, a federal agency of which the Council is a statewide affiliote.

Mojor gront proposols ore occepted an April 1 and October 1. Proposol plonning gront requests for up to \$750, minigront requests far up to \$1,500, and Film-&-Speaker minigrant requests for up to \$500 may be submitted ot ony time.

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NEXT PROPOSAL DEADLINE: October 1, 1992

Proposals must conform to the 1992 Guide to the Grant Program. Send 10 copies to the San Francisco office by the due date.

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